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2003 Training Review

Fighter Wing excels

New Joint Force
Headquarters

Mobilization
update

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AN

January 2004



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Spc. Russell Simonis
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From the top

As we begin another new year, I want to briefly share with you three experiences I had during the year just past. They have to do with the finest men and women of Wisconsin — soldiers and airmen of the Wisconsin National Guard.

First, shipping out. During the past year about 1,500 members of the Army and Air National Guard of Wisconsin were ordered to active duty, mustered at their hometown armories or air bases, made final preparations for their active duty missions — then, in most cases, deployed to someplace far away from their homes, families, jobs, and civilian lives. From Ashland to Beloit, from Rhinelander to Prairie du Chien — and in 17 other Wisconsin communities in between — soldiers and airmen said good-bye to their loved ones as they answered their nation's call.

I watched these farewells with mixed emotions. On one hand, I regretted that families would be separated, that holidays and birthdays and school plays would be missed, and that many of these fine young men and women of our Wisconsin National Guard were being sent into harm's way. But on the other hand, I was so proud of them as they prepared to serve.

I was also proud of Wisconsin for all the support our troops were shown as they left their hometowns for destinations half a world away. It wasn't always this way.

Second, serving America. Most of Wisconsin knows only as much about what our troops are doing overseas as they learn from the national news stories produced by wire services, major newspapers or network television crews. These stories sometimes tell us good news, but they always find a way to tell us when things go wrong — and they rarely cover the Wisconsin National Guard.

In November, I had an opportunity to visit many of our troops in Kuwait and Iraq and see firsthand what the news media have not been able to show you: that our Wisconsin troops are highly respected by their active duty superiors, that they are doing excellent work in a hostile environment, that they are serving both America and the Iraqi people with distinction. Seeing these sons and daughters of Wisconsin in action was the highlight of my military career.

The service of our Wisconsin troops has not come easily nor without significant sacrifice. Families are temporarily disrupted and key employees are absent from Wisconsin businesses. And, most seriously of all, about two dozen Wisconsin Guard soldiers have been wounded in hostile action. Please keep these brave men and women and their

families in your thoughts and prayers until their safe return.

Finally, coming home. Of all the experiences I've had during the past year, none equals the happiness I've felt seeing our troops step off airplanes and into the arms of their families. If you've ever seen a father hold his six-month-old baby for the first time, you can begin to imagine how joyous these homecomings have been.

I hope to see many more homecomings in the year ahead.



Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening

During 2003, nine Wisconsin members of the U.S. armed forces lost their lives while serving their country in Iraq.

IN MEMORIAM

- Sgt. Kirk A. Straseskie, 23, Beaver Dam, 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, U.S. Marine Corps.
- Maj. Mathew E. Schram, 36, Brookfield, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, U.S. Army.
- Sgt. 1st Class Dan H. Gabrielson, 39, Spooner, 652nd Engineer Company, U.S. Army Reserve.
- Spc. Paul J. Sturino, 21, Rice Lake, 101st Airborne Division, U.S. Army.
- Pfc. Rachel K. Bosveld, 19, Waupun, 527th Military Police Company, V Corps, U.S. Army.
- Spc. Eugene A. Uhl III, 21, Amherst, 101st Airborne Division, U.S. Army.
- Sgt. Warren S. Hanson, 36, Clintonville, 101st Airborne Division, U.S. Army.
- 2nd Lt. Jeremy L. Wolfe, 37, Menomonee, 101st Airborne Division, U.S. Army.
- Maj. Christopher J. Splinter, 43, Platteville, 1st Engineer Brigade, U.S. Army.

I join with all of Wisconsin in mourning the loss of these brave Americans.

Albert H. Wilkening

Letters to the Editor...

I received my latest issue of *At Ease* and was so surprised to see that it is now in color. When I receive these, I always read through the entire magazine. I must commend you on this color issue.

*David W. Ecoff, Sr.
Retired Lt. Col., Wisconsin Air National Guard*

The new *At Ease* looks fantastic! Keep up the good work!

*Tech. Sgt. Tim Hein
115th Fighter Wing*

Congratulations on the new magazine-format *At Ease*. It's a first-class publication, with first-class pictures and stories, a quantum leap from the old newsprint tabloid that served its time. Nothing is more important in print journalism these days than changing with the times. Your new colorful magazine will get more readers, more attention and more credit for the Wisconsin National Guard. Please pass on my congratulations to the entire public affairs staff of the Wisconsin Guard. Great job!

*Dave Zweifel
Editor, The Capital Times, Madison
Retired Col., Wisconsin Army National Guard*

Note: Dave Zweifel was founding editor of At Ease in 1976.

people in the news

Jackan earns First Army top honors

Story by Larry Sommers
At Ease Staff

A Wisconsin National Guard artilleryman is the First U.S. Army Soldier of the Year for 2003.

Spc. Daniel R. Jackan, a forward observer in 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, placed first among seven command-level and regional Soldiers of the Year from throughout First Army. The selection was made after two days of field tests and questioning by a group of command sergeants major, in a competition held in Atlanta, Ga., in August.

"Everyone will look to you, regardless of rank or position, for outstanding performance, and it is your duty to demonstrate superb leadership to all who see you," said Command Sgt. Maj. Mitch Lewis, guest speaker at the awards ceremony, addressing all the competitors. "You will have a unique power to motivate others by your

achievements, your demeanor and very presence."

Jackan was named Soldier of the Year for First U.S. Army West (Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan) in an earlier competition at Camp Grayling, Mich. He is a full-time student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, studying secondary education.

Jackan also was runner-up for U.S. Army Forces Command Soldier of the Year, after a three-day competition at Fort McPherson, Ga.

Besides the trip to Atlanta, Jackan received an expense-paid week in Washington, D.C., including opportunities to meet many top soldiers and tour important military sites.

Gov. Jim Doyle congratulates Spc. Daniel Jackan, a forward observer in Det. 1 HHS, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery, who placed first among seven command-level and regional Soldiers of the Year from throughout First Army.



Staff Sgt. Brian Jopek

Guard soldier is USAR's top troop

It's unusual — maybe without precedent — but the United States Army Reserve's 2003 Soldier of the Year is an Army National Guard member: Spc. Tracy Oswald of the 107th Maintenance Company, Wisconsin Army National Guard.

Oswald's unit was mobilized in January and assigned to Fort McCoy to operate the Installation Materials and Maintenance Activity, performing needed repairs on equipment going to, and returning from, Operation Iraqi

Freedom. As activated soldiers and permanent party members on an Army Reserve post, the Guard members based in Sparta, Viroqua and Sussex automatically became part of the USAR's Soldier of the Year competition.

Oswald, Sparta, a 19-year-old Marquette University accounting student and a light-wheel mechanic in the 107th, was named Fort McCoy's Soldier of the Year. She then captured USAR-wide honors after three days of competition — including a rain-drenched PT test, Common

Task Training exams, M-16 target shooting and a very muddy land-navigation course, as well as an oral board exam — and went on to represent the Army Reserve in the U.S. Army Forces

Command competition at Fort McPherson, Ga., in August.

"I'm very happy and very surprised — it was a very close and tight competition among all the soldiers competing," Oswald said after winning the Army Reserve title. "I am very honored to come out on top."

After completing all competitions, Oswald returned to Fort McCoy and continued her professional development by completing MOS school as a heavy-wheel mechanic. She also successfully completed airborne school, including five jumps from an aircraft in three weeks of training, at Fort Benning, Ga. — an unexpected perk from the Soldier-of-the-Year competition.

"Specialist Oswald's success has had a positive influence on company morale," said Capt. Jelora Coman, commander of the 107th, "as we are all proud of her and have enjoyed cheering her on."



Sgt. 1st Class Johnny Beatty, FORSCOM News Service

Spc. Tracy Oswald, right, and Sgt. Dawn Westrum, 1110th Signal Brigade, Fort Meade, Md., complete the "mystery task" of rescuing a 160-pound dummy during the FORSCOM Soldier of the Year competition at Fort McPherson, Ga.



BOOTS ON THE



A member of the 147th Command Aviation Battalion practices 'duck and cover' during a sandstorm in Kuwait. Sandstorms, high temperatures — and most recently — rain, plagued the 147th and other Wisconsin National Guard units serving in Iraq and Kuwait.

Wisconsin National Guard units on active duty

- 724th Engineer Battalion (Iraq)
- 229th Engineer Company (Iraq)
- 32nd Military Police Company (Iraq)
- 1158th Transportation Company (Fort Irwin, Calif.)
- 832nd Medical Company (Fort Lewis, Washington)
- 107th Maintenance Company (Fort McCoy)
- 115th Fighter Wing (Truax Field)
- Det. 1, 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment (Mobilizing at Fort McCoy)
- 264th Engineer Group (Mobilizing at Fort McCoy)
- Company B 118th Medical Battalion (Mobilizing at Fort Drum, N.Y.)
- 232nd Personnel Services Company (Mobilizing at Fort McCoy)
- Task Force Red Arrow (115th Fighter Wing, 128th Air Refueling Wing, 440th Airlift Wing)

Wisconsin National Guard units returned from active duty

- 64th Rear Operations Center (Monroe)
- 1157th Transportation Company (Oshkosh)
- 332nd Rear Area Operations Center (Berlin)
- 128th Air Refueling Wing (Mitchell Field)
- 147th Command Aviation Battalion (Madison)
- 829th Engineer Detachment (Richland Center)
- 106th Engineer Detachment (Ashland)
- 128th Air Control Squadron (Volk Field)

It would be hard to imagine a busier year for the Wisconsin National Guard than was 2003.

More than a dozen units mobilized and deployed to the other side of the world, where they took part in two separate, large-scale operations. Other units, as well as individual soldiers and airmen, served here in the U.S. to defend our homeland or support military installations stretched beyond their limits.

By summer, a few units had completed their missions and headed for home. But as the year drew to a close, still other Wisconsin Guard units were just getting their marching orders — heading out to relieve active, Guard and reserve units approaching a full year away from home.

January

The year 2003 began with 480 members of the Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard already on active duty, many since shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Now, before U.S. military action against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq, things were again stirring here in Wisconsin:

- The 107th Maintenance Company mobilized 110 members to beef up the mobilization station maintenance capabilities at Fort McCoy.
- The Army Guard set up a task force of 32nd Brigade soldiers to augment security at the Air Guard's base at Truax Field in Madison, and at both the Reserve and Guard bases at Milwaukee's Mitchell Field. Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve security forces had been on active duty for well over a year and were spread too thin to sustain an adequate security level.
- The 832nd Medical Company, West Bend, sent about 45 soldiers and four UH-1 Huey air ambulances to fill the gap left at Fort Lewis, Wash., when the installation's medevac helicopters were needed elsewhere.

This was just the beginning.

at ease

GROUND



Mobilizations continue

Still more than a month before hostilities would commence in Iraq, more Wisconsin Army Guard units were ordered to active duty.

In Madison, the 147th Command Aviation Battalion was mobilized Feb. 2. The Madison aviators had deployed to Kuwait from July 2001 through August 2002 supporting Operation Desert Spring, so they were already familiar with desert flying and even with the bases they would occupy in Kuwait when they arrived on station in March.

Soldiers of the 229th Engineer Company, Prairie du Chien and Platteville, also knew something about the region. In 1990, the unit had mobilized for Operation Desert Storm. The call came again on Feb. 4, 2003. Normally, a unit would have a little time between receiving an alert notification and a mobilization order; this time, the 229th had about four hours. Then, given only three days from mob order to report date, all 160 soldiers nevertheless showed up on time.

For 53 members of the Ashland-based 106th Quarry Team, there were more questions than answers — notably, why was this unit mobilized in mid-February? The 106th has a straightforward, if unusual, mission: making little rocks out

of big rocks with a giant 150-tons-per-hour rock-rushing machine. Did Iraq need a lot of little rocks? Apparently not. After more than two months marking time at Fort McCoy, the 106th — minus crusher — was sent to Fort Lewis, Wash., where the soldiers provided needed support to the Army's national Reserve Officer Training Corps advance camp. So instead of making gravel for the Army, the 106th helped make lieutenants.

And for a dozen soldiers of Richland Center's 829th Engineer Detachment, mobilization orders seemed all too familiar. In late 2001, the unit sent 12 members to Afghanistan for six months; this time the entire unit of carpenters, plumbers, masons and electricians deployed to Kuwait.

The 1,000 troop call-up

On March 1, Wisconsin received its biggest mobilization order for Army Guard forces in more than 41 years. Nearly 1,000 troops, members of two company-sized units and one battalion, were ordered to active duty



A member of the 32nd Military Police Company confers with two Iraqi police officers in Baghdad.

effective two weeks later. Joining other mobilized Wisconsin National Guard units were 160 members of the 32nd Military Police Company, Milwaukee and Madison; 300 soldiers from the 1158th Transportation Company of Tomah, Beloit and Black River Falls; and about 500 soldiers from the 724th Engineer Battalion of Hayward, Superior, Chippewa Falls, Medford, Tomahawk and Rhinelander. The mid-March call was the largest single-day mobilization of Wisconsin Guard troops since the 32nd Division's call-up for the 1960 Berlin Crisis.

These soldiers were just settling in at Fort McCoy to complete their mobilization processing when military operations began in Iraq.



Members of the 724th Engineer Battalion repair window jambs and replace broken glass and torn screens at a school in southern Iraq.



The 32nd MPs and 724th Engineers eventually deployed to Kuwait in May and got into Iraq a bit later, but the transportation soldiers would have a different experience. The Army's projected need for heavy trucks to transport tanks and fighting vehicles in

Iraq vanished in the swift progress of combat operations, so about half the 1158th's 300 soldiers were released from active duty in June. But the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., and the U.S. Army's Armor Center at Fort Knox, Ky., needed the

unit's heavy hauling capabilities, and 140 soldiers and their Heavy Equipment Transporters were sent to the two active duty installations.

Air Guard's continued involvement

Wisconsin Air Guard units were tapped within hours of 9-11. Many of Wisconsin's airmen had already accomplished active-duty missions and returned home as hostilities in Iraq were about to begin. Madison's 115th Fighter Wing stayed busy with an ongoing alert mission at Truax Field — and that mission continues to this day. The 128th Air Refueling Wing also conducted military operations at home and abroad since the September 2001 attacks, but requirements for the 128th's active-duty support had begun to scale down. Then, in early March, the unit's air refueling services were back in demand, and another 100 airmen and several KC-135 tankers flew off to support Air Force efforts in and around Southwest Asia.

The 128th Air Control Squadron, Volk Field, was also tapped again. In the months following 9-11 the unit operated a mobile radar site in northern Illinois, but the squadron's new orders sent them to Afghanistan.

Missions accomplished

The summer months brought an end to the missions of three deployed Wisconsin Army Guard units.

The 332nd Rear Area Operations Center, Berlin, left Wisconsin for Afghanistan in mid-December 2002, and all 28 of the unit's soldiers arrived home safely on July 11.

Two other units had been at Fort Bragg, N.C., for nearly a year. The 64th Rear Operations Center, Monroe, arrived home on July 27, and the 1157th Transportation Company, Oshkosh, on Aug. 18. Both units, while stationed at Fort Bragg, had members deployed overseas for either Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

A student-in-arms reflects on Iraq

By Laura Naylor (32nd MP Company, Baghdad, Iraq)

I usually define myself as a college student, proudly proclaiming the fact that I belong to the fine University of Wisconsin at Madison. As a member of the National Guard, I have always considered myself more of a civilian than a soldier.

Things have changed. I have changed. After spending a short five months overseas, my life will never be the same. I now see myself as a soldier—a proud American soldier.

Every day I drive on the dangerous streets of Baghdad, hear the distant and not-so-distant gunfire, and see the lack of regulated laws. I feel bad for the people who have to live like this all the time.

People may not agree with us being over here. They may think it is a waste of time and money. I can honestly say that it was hard to leave my family and friends, to stop school dead in its tracks, to basically put my life on hold for the unknown.

However, I want everyone to know that I am blessed. I am experiencing something very few Americans can even grasp. I will be able to go home and fall in love with my whole life all over again. Every little detail will mean the world to me. The smell of grass, the falling rain (or snow), my own bed, a flushable toilet, picking out my own clothes and the ability to go anywhere at anytime without fear for my life. In other words... freedom! This is the very reason I am here, so the people of Iraq can understand what it feels like to be free.

Every day at work I see sadness in the peoples' eyes. I've seen brothers betray brothers, people shoot at their neighbors and kids alienated from their parents. This city is garbage-laden, with no government to help clean it up. I see police officers too afraid to answer calls or help their own people. It is amazing that this city can still function. Somehow the people find enough courage to persevere through the hard times.



Two soldiers of the 229th Engineer Company escaped their burning truck just before it became engulfed in flames after striking a land mine.

Moving the finish line

All Wisconsin Army Guard units activated in the early months of 2003 were called up as part of a 'Partial Mobilization' of the Guard and reserve. Under this provision of federal law, members of the Guard and reserve can be called to active duty for no more than two years. But the mobilization orders our units received were only 12-month orders, and they came with an expectation that overseas service would be limited to about half that time — only about six months "downrange." The six other months were needed for pre- and post-mobilization processing, and to expend any military leave earned by soldiers during their time on active duty.

As some units were approaching their expected six months overseas service, the Pentagon announced a new policy: Guard and reserve soldiers would be needed — "boots on the ground" — for one full year overseas. The finish line had just been moved six months.

This new policy was not good news for soldiers, their families or their civilian employers. Soldiers who expected to come home in September wouldn't be back until March; those who thought they'd be finished in November would have to wait until May.

The 12-month "boots on the ground" policy would affect most Wisconsin Army

Guard soldiers deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Some exceptions were made for units whose services were no longer required.

One such exception applied to a portion of the 147th Aviation Battalion. This unit shipped out to Kuwait in March with 205 members of the battalion's Headquarters Company, Company C and Company D. Because another unit was set to assume the battalion's command and administrative functions, the 147th's headquarters and most of the maintenance soldiers from Company D were no longer required; and so 160 members came home in mid-September. But the aviation mission didn't go away, so 45 members of the unit — including all the pilots and crew chiefs from Company C and about a dozen maintenance troops from Company D — were kept in Kuwait until they could be relieved by another unit.

Continued on page 10

Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening talks with members of the 829th Engineer Company in Kuwait in November. Wilkening took the trip to visit deployed units in Kuwait and Iraq.





Norm Lenburg

Chief Warrant Officer Leif Mikkelson greets his son Eric and wife Jill at the 147th Command Aviation Battalion's welcome home ceremony on Dec. 22 for the remaining 45 members.



Norm Lenburg

Purple Hearts

In September the first casualty from hostile action was reported from one of our deployed units. A soldier from the 32nd Military Police Company was seriously injured when an improvised explosive device was detonated while she was on patrol in Baghdad. This would not be the first IED attack on the MP company, nor the last injury suffered by soldiers from this unit.

By year's end, about 20 soldiers from the 32nd MP Company were injured by IEDs while they patrolled the Iraqi capital. Only a few injuries were considered serious, none were life-threatening — and most of the injured soldiers were quickly returned to duty.

Two soldiers from the 229th Engineer Company were injured when their dump truck struck a land mine near Tikrit. One soldier received a serious foot injury and the other suffered what was believed to be a temporary hearing injury. The truck was destroyed.

Clearly, Wisconsin's sons and daughters were serving in harm's way. But it was also clear that the protective gear worn by our soldiers works. It saves lives.

Two-way traffic and a false alarm

As 2003 was drawing to a close, the Wisconsin Guard was tapped to provide forces for a second rotation of troops to Iraq. At the same time, a few units started coming home.

Four Army Guard units received alert notifications on Nov. 6, and for three of them a mobilization order followed within a few days. The 264th Engineer Group Headquarters, Chippewa Falls; Company B, 118th Medical Battalion, Waukesha; and the 232nd Personnel Services

A soldier from the 264th Engineer Group says goodbye to a family member in December. The 264th as well as Company B, 118th Medical Battalion, the 232nd Personnel Services Company and 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment will be leaving soon for their overseas missions.



Company, Madison, were ordered to active duty for up to 18 months effective Dec. 7. (The new, 18-month activations were standard, designed to accommodate a 12-month overseas deployment with training and administrative time before and after.)

Another unit, the Wisconsin portion of the 139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, had been on alert since Valentine's Day 2003. On Dec. 7, our state's ten public affairs soldiers entered active duty and joined up with their Illinois-based parent unit for mobilization processing at Fort McCoy.

While newly-mobilized units were heading out to their mobilization stations in one direction, two units were on a reverse heading. The 829th Engineer Detachment returned from Kuwait Dec. 13, and the final 45 members of the 147th Aviation Battalion — the first troops required to stay overseas beyond their original six-month expectation — landed at Volk Field shortly after midnight Dec. 20, just in time to spend Christmas with their families.

The fourth Army Guard unit alerted on Nov. 6, Kenosha-based 1st Battalion, 126th Field Artillery, remained on alert

for about six weeks but was released from alert in time for the holidays.

Year-end 2003

On Dec. 31, 2003, the Wisconsin Guard had 1,540 soldiers and airmen serving on active duty. Of those, 900 were deployed overseas with about 200 more expected to ship out after they complete mobilization processing.

The 1,540 troops now on active duty constitute fewer than half of the Wisconsin National Guard members activated since the current mobilization of the Guard and reserve began more than two years ago. ■

Web sites connect units with family and friends

Two of Wisconsin's deployed units — the 724th Engineer Battalion and the 32nd Military Police Company — and the 1-147th Command Aviation Battalion who returned home in December, have developed Web sites to document their experiences and to stay in touch with their families and friends.

The 724th Engineer Battalion, deployed to southern Iraq since May, has companies based in Hayward, Superior, Spooner, Chippewa Falls, Medford, Tomahawk and Rhinelander. The unit's unofficial Web site was developed and is maintained by Sgt. Quinn Williams. Williams bought a stuffed camel while on his honeymoon in Florida, took it with him to Iraq, and has photographed it in hundreds of settings — usually with one or more unit members — for the entertainment of site visitors. This camel theme gives the site its name, www.armycamel.com.

The site is chock full of pictures, with over thirty photo galleries featuring "the Camel" and unit members. Visitors can sign the guestbook, and there are even some short films to view. You can also order your very own "Army Camel" t-shirt.

Madison's 147th Command Aviation Battalion, in Kuwait from March through December, created the Web site www.badgerden.us. There

are fourteen different photo galleries devoted to the experiences of the units' companies, plus topics like Friday Night Boxing, Predeployment, and views of Baghdad. Two galleries are devoted to the ruins of Babylon. There is at least one picture of every deployed member of the 147th, and you can buy prints from FotoTime through the Web site.

Milwaukee and Madison's 32nd Military Police Company, who have been in Baghdad since May, have a Web site through their higher command at www.519mp.org. On the left side of the page under Units in the Battalion, click on the 32nd link. Their newsletter is posted with comments from the commander, first sergeant, platoons and sections. Some individual soldiers' accomplishments and bravery are highlighted in the platoon and sections comments. Click on Pictures on the upper left corner and view snapshots of the soldiers.



The 147th's Web site, www.badgerden.us, showcases some of their travels into Iraq. Here the ruins of Babylon are in the foreground, with one of Saddam's castles in the background.



Above: The 724th's Camel, riding his own camel through the deserts of Iraq. The Engineer Battalion's Web site is www.armycamel.com.

Left: A member of the 32nd Military Police Company helps line up members of the Iraqi Police Force. More photos are available at www.519mp.org.



A member of the 32nd Infantry Brigade focuses on a target during a training exercise at Annual Training in June of 2003.
Spec. Mary Flynn

Annual Training 2003

By Maj. Bob Giblin
At Ease Staff

“From top to bottom, most of my soldiers were not just positive, they were pumped up.”

“A positive attitude is 90 percent — make that 99 percent — of the game, and positive attitudes helped make AT 2003 very successful,” said Col. James Krueck, commander of the 32nd Infantry Brigade, after two weeks of Annual Training at Fort McCoy. “From top to bottom, most of my soldiers were not just positive, they were pumped up.”

The 32nd has seen a lot of changes over the years, having been a division, then a separate mechanized infantry brigade, then a mechanized brigade rounding out the Minnesota-based 34th Infantry Division. In March 2001, the chief of the National Guard Bureau approved the unit’s conversion from

mechanized to a light infantry and from a divisional brigade to an enhanced separate brigade. As light infantry, the soldiers will train to fight on foot, not from humvees and armored personnel carriers. As an enhanced separate brigade, the 32nd exists outside of any divisional structure and gets its own high priority for equipment, support, and training.

This year, soldiers focused on individual and military skill qualifications. “We trained on fewer tasks,” said Krueck, “but trained them to standard, and retrained.”

Training was helped this year by a change in the way that the Wisconsin National Guard’s traditional Governor’s Day was handled. In past years, the governor’s visit usually included a ceremonial pass-in-review on the Fort

McCoy parade field. This year, however, Gov. Jim Doyle visited units in the field as they trained, which allowed the brigade to remain focused on its training.

“Our soldiers appreciated it a lot more, too,” said Krueck. “They liked having the governor see actual training, and they also appreciated the opportunity to show the governor what they really do.”

Over the next several years, training and validation will move to the squad and platoon level, company level and battalion level, building up to a brigade exercise at the Joint Readiness Training Center, (JRTC), Fort Polk, La., in 2008.

Between now and 2008, the brigade will send one company from 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, to JRTC to act as opposing forces — OPFOR, the “enemy” in JRTC battle exercises — and another to participate as part of a “friendly” coalition force. The brigade also will supply soldiers as observers and controllers at JRTC, and will participate in an upcoming Warfighter exercise at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Then, in 2007, the brigade plans a rehearsal exercise at Fort McCoy to prepare for the 2008 brigade exercise. The rehearsal will include some 3,500 brigade soldiers, plus as many as 3,000 additional soldiers, who will provide mechanized infantry, armor, aviation and other support.

Krueck believes the brigade’s transition has given it a renewed sense of purpose, and that the morale boost provided by the new mission is showing tangible results. “Actually, this has helped recruiting and retention a lot,” he explains. “This year, we’re up 140 in strength, and we’re exceeding our recruiting goals. Our attrition rate is declining without stop-loss. People are excited about the new mission and want to stay in.

“Now, we need to focus on mobilization and readiness. The 32nd needs to be ready on a moment’s notice. Our soldiers need to understand the world situation, and keep up that positive, can-do attitude.”

A 32nd Infantry Brigade soldier takes cover behind a tree while participating in an exercise during Annual Training last year.

January 2004



Sgt. 1st Class Chris Malingier



A rocket, launched by Battery A, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, from a Multiple Launch Rocket System launch vehicle, flies downrange at Fort McCoy.

Spc. Gretel Sharpee



Spc. Mary Flynn

Pfc. Douglas O'Keefe and his wife Kristy, Wilmot, Wis., join Kristy's sister Briana and brother Jacob Robers, Brighton, Wis., to watch the MLRS fire. O'Keefe is a fire direction control specialist for Battery A, 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery.

Rocketeers

Story by Spcs. Sara Roeske, Mary Flynn and Gretel Sharpee
At Ease Staff

"We're pretty proud that he would want to defend his country."

The Wisconsin National Guard's first live-fire training with the Army's Multiple Launch Rocket System became a family affair at Fort McCoy June 6. Members of the 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, invited family members to watch rockets go whooshing down range.

The battalion is converting from the 155mm self-propelled howitzer to MLRS — a highly mobile, automatic system that fires surface-to-surface rockets and missiles. (In Army parlance, a missile has a guidance system based on inertial navigation or Global Positioning System data, while a rocket depends on a ballistic trajectory to hit its target.) From inside the launch vehicle's cab, a crew of three can fire up to 12 MLRS rockets.

Battery A fired the MLRS during its two weeks' Annual Training, from May 24 to June 7. The rest of the battalion soldiers had the opportunity to fire in the following weeks.

Spc. Greg Weller, a radio operator with Battery A, was especially excited to show his family what he does in the Guard. The smiles on their faces showed their pride and support.

"We're pretty proud that he would want to defend his country," said Greg's parents, Kim and Sue Weller. Knowing that he could be called to duty at any time scares them a little, however — especially since September 11, 2001.

This day's event brought back memories for Frank Finch III, Milwaukee, who served two tours as a machine gunner in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War.

"The military is a great way to establish discipline and learn a new skill. The benefits are great as well," Finch said.

His son, Spc. Keith Finch is a crewmember of the new MLRS. As one of the first in Battery A to learn how to operate the MLRS, he became one of the trainers for the rest of the unit when he returned from his Advanced Individual Training.

The battalion's transition to MLRS began last year, and according to the battalion commander, Lt. Col. John Schroeder, "It's going very well. Battery A's live-fire exercise June 6th was excellent."



Putting their best feet fo

Infantrymen from Company C, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, pour through a breach in the lines during Lanes Training at Fort McCoy, June 2003.

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Maling



Forward



Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Malingier

Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry lay down a wall of fire as they react to contact during lanes training at Fort McCoy, Wis. A live-fire exercise, it tests the mettle of the soldier in a simulated combat environment.

**Story by Spcs. Mary Flynn
and Gretel Sharpee
At Ease Staff**

You hear them before you see them — leaves rustling, twigs cracking, as they slowly creep through in the woods. You know they're over there, but you can't even begin to see them. Suddenly, gunshots ring out, and the woods erupt with action. From nowhere, soldiers in heavy camouflage, carrying rifles, appear and rush toward the narrow gravel road.

"Go! Go! Go!" They fling themselves down on the ground, calling out to each other as smoke fills the air. A few are able to cross the road and lie in the shelter of the berm lined with coils of barbed wire. One by one, soldiers fall to the ground; they've been hit. A little farther down the road, men have managed to cut through the enemy wire, and they take turns low-crawling to the other side of the barrier. "I'm out of ammo!" and "Cover me!" ring out all along the barrier. From behind trees and brush, they fire their weapons at enemy soldiers.

Someone yells out, "ENDEX!" and the action stops. The "dead" rise from where they'd fallen and join the "living" soldiers to sit beside the road and receive the after-action

review from their commanding officers. Members of 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, listen carefully as their cadre deliver constructive criticism.

This is an exercise, one of many the battalion will conduct during Annual Training 2003. Before AT is finished, they will practice other battle skills, such as breaking contact and reacting to an ambush. This year's Annual Training is a little bit different from those in the past. All of the infantry battalions in the 32nd Brigade are learning to use new equipment and practice tactical skills specific to "leg" infantry. The brigade's transition from mechanized to light infantry, now in its second year, means that soldiers who once rode Humvees and Bradley fighting vehicles to the field, now go on foot. Not only is the training more physically demanding, but it affects field preparation. Soldiers have to carry all of their gear on their backs, forcing them to pack much lighter.

The soldiers do not seem to mind the conversion. To them, infantry is infantry; whether they march or ride does not matter. And they no longer have to worry about mechanical breakdowns.

"But man, I miss those vehicles though," jokes Cpl. Ben Streeter, Madison, a member

of Company C, as he makes his way to visit the medic after an intense training exercise.

The 32nd Brigade medics have had to adjust as well: "We have changed our training scenarios to match the new types of injuries we are expecting," says Spc. Kurt Wozniak, Marshfield, a medic with 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry. Light infantrymen are physically active and most commonly have injuries to their muscles, said Wozniak, while in mechanized infantry, most injuries result from vehicle-related accidents.

Wisconsin's light infantrymen include car salesmen, deputy sheriffs, office managers, computer technicians, and men from other civilian careers. Some are full-time Guard members in the Active Guard and Reserve program. Many are, or were, students and joined the Guard for tuition assistance.

They discovered, however, that the Guard's impact on their lives went far beyond college finances; the skills and discipline they learned through military training helped tremendously with their studies. "It helps you to concentrate," said Spc. Edward Schultz, Watertown, a member of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry.

Student members of the 127th's headquarters company reconnaissance squad agree that on campus, they automatically feel set apart. You have a responsibility and an identity just from a uniform. Also, drill weekends distract soldiers from the pressures of college. "It takes the edge off of school" said Spc. Kurtis Schaeuble, Menasha.

The men also agree that the infantry is a lot of work.

"If we aren't training, we're either eating, sleeping, or cleaning weapons," says Cpl. Jon Jones, Appleton, of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry. Foot soldiers live in the field and do the Army's dirty work. They train in any weather, and during the busy two-week AT, there is little room for downtime.

So why would a man subject himself to bad weather, bugs, blisters, and constant hard work?

The question surprises the men of the 127th. Most of them can't imagine doing anything else. Many say it is because of the camaraderie.

"We're one big, happy, aggravated family," says Staff Sgt. Steve Haugen, New London.

"Yeah, misery breeds closeness," agrees Sgt. 1st Class Mike Roth, Oshkosh.

Others enjoy mastering infantry challenges. "I like the feeling of accomplishment when I complete a task," says Pfc. Dan Constantineau, Milwaukee, a member of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry.

Some soldiers can say it in six words: "We get to blow stuff up."



Spc. Mary Flynn

Infantrymen from the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, get some chow in the field during Annual Training at Fort McCoy.

Following the after-action review with their commanding officers, the troops prepare to repeat the battle drill once more before they eat chow. After dinner, they'll head back to the field to do the drills again and again, until their leaders are satisfied. They are hot, dirty, tired, and haven't showered in days; but they drive on like true soldiers.

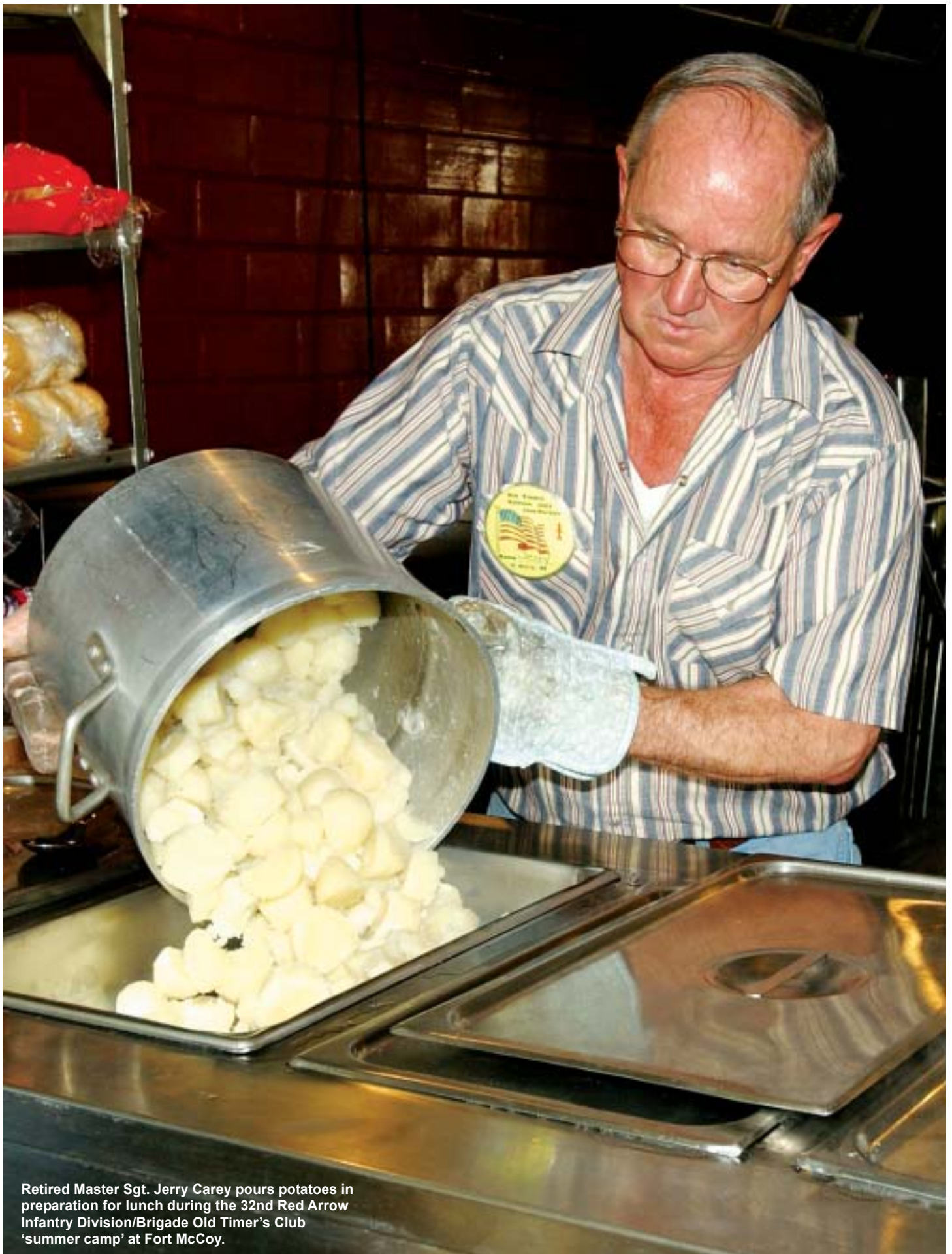
Staff Sgt. Paul Wagner, Elkhorn, of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry, made the point during his 12-mile road march

in the testing for the Expert Infantryman Badge. Soaked through with sweat and rain, dog-tired, and with over four miles left to go in just 50 minutes, he took a few moments to share his view of the profession — then broke into a trot to catch up with his comrades, unhindered by the 40-pound rucksack strapped on his shoulders.

"Infantry is soldiering in its purest form," he said with a smile. "It's what being a soldier is all about."



Pvt. Eric Stilp, Winchester, calls back to his comrades to "cover him" as he conducts a 3-5 second rush during a battle drill. Spc. Mary Flynn



Retired Master Sgt. Jerry Carey pours potatoes in preparation for lunch during the 32nd Red Arrow Infantry Division/Brigade Old Timer's Club 'summer camp' at Fort McCoy.

Old Timers

By Sgt. 1st Class Julie Friedman
Photos by Staff Sgt. Keith Fenske
At Ease Staff

Vets. Retirees. Old-timers.

Regardless what you call them, these guys have been around — and they have some good advice for today's Guard soldiers and their families.

Every year since 1947, members of the 32nd Red Arrow Infantry Division/Brigade Old Timers Club have gathered for a full week of "summer camp" during the 32nd Brigade's Annual Training at Fort McCoy.

They enjoy visiting units of the 32nd Brigade in the field and to learn about the latest equipment and training, but they also love to share their memories with current soldiers.

"I think all young people should serve a year or two after high school, just for the discipline it teaches you," said E.J. "Doc" Sartell of Janesville, who served for 14 years. "I was a young hotshot high school athlete, and the older guys put me in my place. It gave me the discipline I've lived by all my life."

Sartell, now 81, joined the National Guard in 1938 and was federalized Oct. 15, 1940, with the rest of the Guard. He became part of the Americal Division, that was formed in New Caledonia and fought from Guadalcanal to the occupation of Japan during World War II. He was discharged in 1945 but rejoined the Guard and was activated again in 1950 for the Korean conflict. He rose to the rank of master sergeant before getting out for good in 1952, something he really doesn't regret.

"The pay was low and there were no benefits," he said, "but when first I joined it was the Depression. A dollar a drill was a lot then."

Fortunately, pay and benefits for reservists got a lot better over the next decade.

Retired Sgt. 1st Class W. Fred Rockwell, Eau Claire, was drafted in 1946 but released in 1947, and ended up joining the Guard in 1951. He retired from the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry in 1985 with 35 years of service.

"It's a good sideline job and the benefits have really made a difference in the quality of my retirement, especially with Tricare," he said.

Following in his footsteps are his son, Sgt. 1st Class Pete Rockwell, who works full-time for the Guard in Madison; and his grandson, Spc. Dan Rockwell, a supply specialist currently deployed to Kuwait with the 32nd Military Police Company.

"My son joined for the student loan repayment program and my grandson joined for the college money they're offering now," he said.

B. K. "Dutch" Deutscher, Mondovi, spent 34 years in the service, retiring in 1981 as command sergeant major of the 264th Engineer Group. He thinks every young person should have military experience, and those making the military a career should "learn as much as you can, that's the way you get promoted." To soldiers who joined for the educational benefits, he says, "Get your degree and get a commission."

His advice to leaders is: "Be firm, but fair; and don't be afraid to delegate responsibility."

"My philosophy has always been that a commander is only as good as his staff," said retired Brig. Gen. Charles Scharine, Whitewater, who started out in the Guard as a private in 1953. He received a direct commission in 1956 and eventually became commander of the 32nd Infantry Brigade, the assignment from which he retired in 1987.

Senior leaders, said Scharine, should "maintain a sincere confidence in your junior officers and NCOs. Trust their judgment, but supervise the results."

Those who enjoyed long and successful military careers credited their wives and families. While encouraging military wives or husbands to have their own interests, they said it's important that spouses trust each other and maintain the integrity of the relationship.

"It's a hardship on the families at times," said Rockwell, "but they need to support the troops."



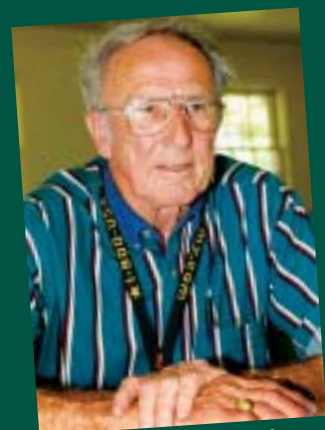
E.J. "Doc" Sartell



Fred Rockwell



Charles Scharine



B.K. "Dutch" Deutscher

Master Sgt. Louis Gagliardi of the 115th Fighter Wing provides aid to a fallen comrade following a simulated chemical attack, as part of an Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE) held at Volk Field. Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman



ORI: Fighter Wing rated 'Excellent'



Staff Sgt. Alice Sischo detains an intruder during the Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE) in April.



Master Sgt. Donna O'Connor
115th Fighter Wing firefighter Senior Airman Crystal Stone opens a water main during the June Operational Readiness Exercise at Volk Field.

By Tech. Sgt. Michael P. Collier and Capt. Chris Rodel
115th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Yes, you've been doing it all along — but now, prove you can do it.

In the seven years since the 115th Fighter Wing last proved itself to Air Force inspectors, the Madison unit's F-16 fighters have suppressed Saddam Hussein's air defenses, patrolled the vulnerable skies over the upper Midwest, and met a brisk training schedule at Hardwood Range and elsewhere.

But now the Air Force said it was time to formally validate the wing's combat capabilities through a new Operational Readiness Inspection.

A lot had changed since the last ORI.

"Our primary weapons system, the F-16 Fighting Falcon, is not the same as it was back in 1996," said Master Sgt. David Anderson, wing historian. "Back then, the F-16 was basically a day-time general purpose aircraft. But in 2003 this aircraft is capable of carrying precision-guided munitions aided by targeting pods for both day- and night-time employment. The pilot can even fly and deliver munitions at night with the aid of night vision goggles."

Recent fluctuations in retirements and enlistments required rapid, yet thorough, training. And the training had to be accomplished without compromising the unit's real-world mission of protecting the Midwestern skies.

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It all added up to a major headache for wing commander Col. Steven Foster, who assumed command less than a year ago, when Brig. Gen. Fred Sloan was assigned as Wisconsin's deputy adjutant general for Air. To prepare personnel for the upcoming ORI and tune up the unit's performance in real life, Foster scheduled two Operational Readiness Exercises, in April and June 2003.

The payoff came August 15-25, when an Air Combat Command inspector general team consisting of 105 inspectors descended on Truax Field and Volk Field to rate the 115th's performance. The ten-day inspection was divided into a deployment phase at Truax and an employment phase at Volk, simulating short-notice deployment and combat operations.

The deployment phase required unit members to prepare and send off 10 F-16s while processing 405 personnel and 205 tons of cargo for deployment. Under the eyes of the inspectors, the wing generated 10 F-16s, and one spare, well within the time requirement and, according to the IG's report, "flawlessly processed all 405 personnel." The unit then sent 11 jets, over 800 personnel, and their associated equipment to Volk Field for the employment phase.

"Employment" of a combat unit like the 115th is a synonym for combat. Once



Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman

Continued on page 27

Lt. Col. Jonathan Graham gets a hand strapping into his F-16 from Tech. Sgt. Matt Normyle.



Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman

Firefighters Staff Sgt. Jennifer Arms, left, and Senior Airman Crystal Stone, right, prepare to assist with a drill during the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) at the 115th Fighter Wing.



Master Sgt. Donna O'Connor

Above: Senior Airman Aaron Lowe and Master Sgt. Charles Bohmert aid an injured victim during the April ORE.



Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman

Left: Staff Sgt. Kimberly Rodel from the 115th Logistics Readiness Squadron performs the function of security augmentee for the April ORE.



Staff Sgt. Michael Murphy, right, and another member of the 115th Fighter Wing give a helping hand to an injured comrade during an ORI simulated drill.

Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman

deployed to Volk Field, the wing launched 58 combat sorties — all but one considered effective by the evaluators. One hundred percent of air-to-air missile shots were judged effective and 93 percent of air-to-ground munition deliveries were scored as hits.

One of the demands of an inspection scenario is doing one's job in a simulated chemical warfare environment. The 115th's personnel, encumbered with bulky protective suits, earned "Outstanding" ratings in both job performance and Nuclear, Biological, Chemical and Conventional Warfare knowledge.

The IG team also conducted 11 separate exercises during the inspection, 7 of which earned "Outstanding" or "Excellent" ratings for the wing. In one significant exercise, the Truax Fire Department took a mere 34 seconds rescuing a disabled pilot from an F-16.

The inspectors scored the unit on 216 separate items, each graded "Outstanding," "Excellent," "Satisfactory," "Marginal," or "Unsatisfactory." The wing scored "Excellent" or "Outstanding" — far exceeding the mission standards, with few, if any, deficiencies — on 63 percent of the items. Only 7 percent of the rated items were less than "Satisfactory."

"To the casual observer," said Foster, "what we did over the ORI may have looked easy.

"We packed up our stuff here, with 'near flawless personnel and cargo processing,' according to the IG. We deployed to Volk, fought the war, then packed up and came home with all our stuff in an amazingly short time. It's a testament to the professionalism of all involved that we made the difficult look easy, and the near-impossible — like maintaining our full-time Noble Eagle mission at the same time — look, well... *possible*."

Earning an overall "Excellent" rating on the ORI proved yet again that the members of the 115th Fighter Wing are among the best in the force. ■



Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman

Above: Members of the 115th Fighter Wing, Wisconsin Air National Guard, await rescue after their bus is damaged in a simulated chemical weapons attack, part of an Operational Readiness Exercise at Volk Field in June.



Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman

Left: Sweep team members Tech. Sgts. Trent Stein and Albert Kelly, 115th Fighter Wing, use a visual reference guide to identify and report Unexploded Ordnance (UXOs) following a simulated chemical attack.

JFHQ

WISCONSIN

"We fight jointly, and we need to train and operate on a daily basis in a joint environment so we can make the transition (from citizen to soldier) very quickly," said Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, newly appointed chief of the National Guard Bureau, in a Pentagon press briefing May 16, 2003. "After all, our symbol is the Minuteman."

Blum was announcing a historic reorganization of the National Guard Bureau into a joint force headquarters. States' and territories' state Guard headquarters were ordered to transform themselves into JFHQs, paralleling the NGB's move in Washington.

"We will be better understood by our active-duty counterparts," Blum predicted. "We will then be seen for what we are — reliable, ready and accessible."

It's all part of the transformation of the armed forces being orchestrated by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

"The wars and conflicts in this 21st century will not be fought by individual services — whether Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines," Rumsfeld told 2003's class of graduating midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy. "You will have to think, train and exercise jointly, because... that is how the wars of your future will be fought."

The Wisconsin National Guard stood up its new joint headquarters Oct. 1, formalizing what has been informal policy in the Badger State for decades.

"The Wisconsin National Guard has long been a leader in jointness among the 54 states and territories," said Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening, the adjutant general. "Our Army and Air Guard commanders and staffs have operated in an effective, informal joint environment for many years."

"The newly-established Joint Force Headquarters Wisconsin will make an already outstanding organization even more effective in the future and will also

enhance our state emergency response capabilities with Wisconsin Emergency Management."

In addition to the Army and Air National Guard, Wilkening invited the other reserve components into the state's headquarters to be part of a truly joint organization, offering effective planning and operations across the full range of capabilities Wisconsin and America expect. Wisconsin's JFHQ was established as a provisional organization, so the state's leaders can fine-tune it during the year ahead.

What will this mean to Wisconsin National Guard members?

Some staff functions have moved from the former State Area Command (STARC) into the new joint staff, and members of the Air Guard's headquarters have been blended into the Joint Force Headquarters. Because the Army and Air National Guard are still controlled by different sets of regulations, policies and procedures, the Joint Force Headquarters includes separate Land Component and Air Component staffs.

Staff functions that can support either or both of the components have been pulled together into a joint staff. These include human resources, installation management (facilities), civil-military relations, military support and information management. Other joint staff functions — including inspector general, judge advocate, surgeon, public affairs, and chaplain — continue to be attached to the adjutant general's personal staff. Positions on the joint and personal staffs may be held by members of either the Army or Air National Guard. The Land Component and Air Component staffs will be headed by members of the Army and Air Guard, respectively.



Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum announced the historic reorganization of the National Guard Bureau in May 2003. Wisconsin and 53 other states and territories were ordered to change their state Guard headquarters into Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQs).

Col. Scott Legwold, an Army Guard officer, has been named chief of the new joint staff. Col. James A. Krueck has succeeded Col. Stephen Peterson as the Land Component chief of staff, and Col. Jerry Olesen is full-time chief of staff for the Air Component.

Land Component staff positions will now be officially designated by the Army's G-series (G-1 through G-4 for Personnel, Intelligence, Operations and Logistics), and Joint Staff positions will be designated J-1 through J-7.

Is this "just another reorganization"? Not according to Blum.

"This will require a new way of thinking," he says. "Most real transformation happens right between your ears. It's not about hardware, and it's not about information technology. It's about how you think. And we need to change the way we think."

Note: A National Guard Bureau article by Master Sgt. Bob Haskell contributed to this story.

A YEAR IN THE GUARD

This chart shows 2004 annual basic pay received by Wisconsin National Guard members for 12 weekend drills and 15 days annual training. It does not include allowances, special pay, or income received by Guard members who perform additional duty.

	Years of Service														
	< 2	2	3	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26
Commissioned Officers															
O-9												23,004	23,336	23,814	24,651
O-8	16,277	16,810	17,164	17,263	17,703	17,442	18,614	19,314	19,515	20,118	20,991	21,796	22,334	22,334	22,334
O-7	13,525	14,153	14,445	14,676	15,093	15,507	15,985	16,462	16,940	18,442	19,711	19,711	19,711	19,711	19,810
O-6	10,024	11,013	11,736	11,735	11,781	12,285	12,352	12,352	13,054	14,295	15,023	15,752	16,166	16,586	17,400
O-5	8,357	9,414	10,066	10,188	10,594	10,838	11,374	11,766	12,272	13,049	13,418	13,783	14,198	14,198	14,198
O-4	7,211	8,347	8,904	9,028	9,545	10,100	10,789	11,327	11,700	11,914	12,039	12,039	12,039	12,039	12,039
O-3	6,340	7,187	7,757	8,457	8,862	9,306	9,595	10,068	10,314	10,314	10,314	10,314	10,314	10,314	10,314
O-2	5,477	6,238	7,185	7,428	7,581	7,581	7,581	7,581	7,581	7,581	7,581	7,581	7,581	7,581	7,581
O-1	4,755	4,949	5,982	5,982	5,982	5,982	5,982	5,982	5,982	5,982	5,982	5,982	5,982	5,982	5,982
Commissioned Officers with more than four years as Enlisted or Warrant Officer															
O-3E				8,457	8,862	9,306	9,595	10,068	10,467	10,695	11,007	11,007	11,007	11,007	11,007
O-2E				7,428	7,581	7,822	8,229	8,544	8,779	8,779	8,779	8,779	8,779	8,779	8,779
O-1E				5,982	6,389	6,625	6,866	7,103	7,428	7,428	7,428	7,428	7,428	7,428	7,428
Warrant Officers (Army National Guard)															
W-5												11,257	11,643	12,031	12,420
W-4	6,551	7,047	7,250	7,449	7,792	7,131	8,474	8,808	9,154	9,696	10,044	10,383	10,735	11,082	11,436
W-3	5,982	6,233	6,488	6,572	6,840	7,147	7,551	7,951	8,377	8,696	9,013	9,150	9,291	9,597	9,904
W-2	5,262	5,563	5,826	6,017	6,181	6,631	6,976	7,232	7,481	7,652	7,796	8,070	8,343	8,618	8,618
W-1	4,647	5,027	5,282	5,447	5,885	6,149	6,384	6,646	6,819	6,976	7,231	7,425	7,425	7,425	7,425
Enlisted Personnel															
E-9							7,916	8,095	8,321	8,588	8,855	9,284	9,648	10,031	10,615
E-8						6,480	6,766	6,943	7,156	7,387	7,802	8,013	8,371	8,570	9,060
E-7	4,505	4,917	5,104	5,354	5,549	5,883	6,071	6,258	6,594	6,761	6,921	7,018	7,346	7,558	8,096
E-6	3,897	4,286	4,476	4,659	4,851	5,284	5,452	5,639	5,803	5,861	5,901	5,901	5,901	5,901	5,901
E-5	3,570	3,808	3,992	4,181	4,474	4,727	4,913	4,972	4,972	4,972	4,972	4,972	4,972	4,972	4,972
E-4	3,272	3,440	3,627	3,809	3,972	3,972	3,972	3,972	3,972	3,972	3,972	3,972	3,972	3,972	3,972
E-3	2,955	3,140	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329	3,329
E-2	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809
E-1		2,506	2,506	2,506	2,506	2,506	2,506	2,506	2,506	2,506	2,506	2,506	2,506	2,506	2,506

Annual pay rates are rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

Wisconsin Guard members on active duty

As this magazine went to press in January, approximately 1,540 members of the Wisconsin National Guard were serving on active duty — receiving active duty pay and benefits.

Compensation for active duty service — as with Guard pay — is based on rank and time in service. The following figures combine basic pay, the basic allowance for subsistence and the basic allowance for housing. Here are some examples:

- Army Specialist or Air Force Senior Airman (E-4) with four years of service — \$35,619.
- Army Staff Sergeant or Air Force Tech Sergeant (E-6) with 12 years — \$50,866.
- Army Master Sergeant or Air Force Senior Master Sergeant (E-8) with 22 years — \$68,752.
- Chief Warrant Officer 3 (W-3) with ten years — \$62,721.
- Captain (O-3) with eight years — \$73,759.

Guard members on active duty are eligible to receive non-taxable allowances for subsistence and housing. The examples given include the “tax advantage” from untaxed allowances.

Based on the U.S. military’s historic custom of providing room and board (or “rations”) as part of a service member’s pay, Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) is meant to offset the costs for service members’ meals. BAS is currently \$175.23 a month for officers. Enlisted personnel receive \$254.46 each month — or \$262.50 per month if rations-in-kind are not available.

Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) is an allowance to offset the cost of housing when service members do not receive government-provided housing. Individual BAH rates depend upon location, pay grade and whether or not a service member has dependents.

Pay and benefit charts are available online at dod.mil/militarypay.

Tuition grant restored by legislature

Soldiers and airmen attending college on the Wisconsin National Guard Tuition Grant Program will continue to have 100 percent of their tuition paid, according to the newly-enacted 2003 Wisconsin Act 83.

The program will pay up to \$2,277.00 per semester, the maximum in-state tuition charged by the UW-Madison. A law passed earlier in the year limited assistance to the average tuition at all UW

campuses. This would have had the effect of paying less than 100 percent of tuition for students at UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee, where tuition is higher than the state average. But legislators found a way to restore the 100-percent level of funding before the earlier law took effect.

In order to receive the tuition assistance, students must be Guard members in good standing and must submit Department of Military Affairs Form 189

within 90 days after the end of the semester for which reimbursement is desired. Even if a member is "flagged" in the personnel system, he or she should submit Form 189 in order to receive benefits if later restored to good standing.

Students who attend qualifying non-state schools are also eligible for the assistance — the lesser of actual tuition paid or \$2,277.00. Guard members attending out-of-state schools (other than

those covered by the Minnesota-Wisconsin reciprocity agreement or other statutorily approved interstate agreement) are not covered under the program, except for those who were in the Guard and attending a qualifying out-of-state school before July 25, 2003.

For further information, contact Lt. Douglas Kolb at 608-242-3447 or Karen Behling, tuition grant administrator, at 608-242-3159.

Unlimited commissary benefits granted to Guard and Reserve

Members of the National Guard and Reserve now receive unlimited commissary benefits, thanks to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004, signed into law by President Bush November 24. Previously, Guard and Reserve members were authorized only 24 shopping days per year at the DoD-operated grocery outlets.

"Instructions have gone out to all continental U.S. stores informing them that reservists now have unlimited shopping and telling store managers how to welcome members of the National Guard and Reserve to the full use of the commissary benefit," said Patrick Nixon, deputy director of the Defense Commissary Agency.

Shoppers should soon see banners saying, "Welcome Guard and Reserve to Full Time Savings," on prominent display.

The liberalized benefit is expected to have the greatest impact on a minority of reservists, because commissaries are located on military bases, and many members do not live near them. The

nearest commissaries for Wisconsin National Guard members are at Fort McCoy, in west-central Wisconsin; Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill.; and the Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, Ill.

Guard members will no longer need to present a Commissary Privilege Card when they shop.

New retiree website

The Retiree Activities Office (RAO) of Madison has created a new Web site. Go to <http://dma.wi.gov> and click on Military Retirees Activities Program. The Web site has links to other organizations, news and information.

The RAO has also created an e-mail distribution list for all military retirees. Send your e-mail address, name, retired military grade and branch of service to widma.retiree@dma.state.wi.us or call (608) 242-3115 or toll free 1-800-335-5147 ext 3115.

The Madison office of the RAO is located at Joint Force Headquarters, 2400 Wright Street, Madison, WI 53704. The office is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:30 a.m. — 11:30 a.m., except holidays.

Some airmen can carry over 'use or lose' leave

Active-duty airmen who were unable to take annual leave this past year because they supported contingency operations will be allowed to accumulate more than the normal 60 days after the fiscal year ends.

Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members who performed full-time training or other full-time duty for more than 29 days

are also eligible for this special leave accrual. Those affected can retain up to 90 days of leave until the end of fiscal 2004, according to officials.

Those who meet the criteria for having excess leave should apply for special leave accrual through their command channels.

— *From Airman magazine, Sept. 2003*

New TRICARE benefits

You and your family may already be entitled to benefits under the new Temporary Reserve Health Care Program, according to the Defense Department. Recent legislation authorized temporary health care benefits and TRICARE eligibility for reserve-component members and their families.

Some benefits were effective Nov. 6, 2003. Others will be phased in after DoD devises procedures and systems to implement them. To summarize briefly:

— Section 701 of the new law authorizes medical and dental screening, at government expense, for members of the Ready Reserve as soon as they are notified of impending activation. This provision will speed up the mobilization process and get troops to their active-duty assignments sooner.

— Section 702 makes TRICARE coverage available to non-mobilized reserve component members and their families if the member is not eligible for coverage from his or her civilian employer, or if the member is receiving unemployment compensation. Such coverage will require payment of a premium at rates yet to be determined.

— Section 703 makes government-provided TRICARE coverage for mobilized reservists begin on the date they receive their activation orders, not on the subsequent activation date.

— Section 704 temporarily extends transitional health care benefits from the current 60

days or 120 days to 180 days. The extension applies to "reservists being deactivated after contingency call-up, other involuntary separations, and separations following retention in support of contingency mission."

— Section 705 requires the General Accounting Office to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the health-care needs of reservists.

— Section 706 limits the FY 2004 outlays for Sections 702, 703, and 704 to a total of \$400 million.

— Section 707 requires the reserve components to establish beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinators to support Guard and Reserve soldiers and their families.

— Section 708 makes newly commissioned officers eligible for health care, pending orders to active duty, if the officer lacks other health coverage.

Reserve component soldiers and family members may be eligible for reimbursement of some health care costs incurred after Nov. 6, 2003, but before the temporary program is implemented.

The Department of Defense therefore encourages families whose sponsors are deployed in support of a contingency operation to save their health care receipts, claims, and the explanation of benefits forms for dates of service on or after November 6, 2003.

Further information on the program will be available, as it develops, at

www.tricare.osd.mil or at www.defenselink.mil/ra.

Events

Annual Family Conference

The annual Family Program Conference will take place on March 26-28, 2004 at The Plaza Hotel and Suites in Wausau. The conference is open to all unit volunteers, commanders, first sergeants, family assistance officers/non-commissioned officers, and recruiting and retention personnel. Conference attendees will receive information about the State Family Program, organizing unit family support structures and how to improve family readiness. For further information, registration packet and hotel reservations contact Master Sgt. Bruce Verdone, Assistant State Family Program Coordinator at (608) 242-3480 or e-mail bruce.verdone@wi.ngb.army.mil.

Air Guard Training

A non-commissioned officer course has been developed for new or prospective supervisors. All technical sergeants and master sergeants who are or soon will be performing in a leadership role are invited to attend. The course will be taught at Volk Field April 18-23, 2004. An application form can be found on the Air Guard Intranet home page.

Fort McCoy Open House

Fort McCoy will host its annual Armed Forces Day Open House, rain or shine, on Saturday, May 15 from 9:00 a.m.

— 3:00 p.m. Activities scheduled for the open house include: Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korean, and Vietnam war displays; guided tours of the installation; training displays; interactive shooting van; military equipment; face painting; personalized dog tags; refreshments; and more. All activities will be located at Fort McCoy's Commemorative Area. For further information call (608) 388-2407.

Hall of Honor Ceremony

The 2004 Wisconsin Army National Guard Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony will take place at the State Capitol in the Assembly Chamber on Sunday, March 7 at 2:00 p.m. Hall of Honor inductees are retired Brig. Gens. Charles Scharine and Roger Greenwood, Lt. Col. John Sarko, Sgt. Maj. Jerry Rohloff, and Master Sgt. Henry Esser. Inductees are nominated based on achievement, devotion to duty, and have exemplified the core values of military service — duty, honor, service, respect, loyalty, integrity and personal courage. The ceremony is open to the public.



Tech. Sgt. Paul Gorman

A member of the 115th Fighter Wing, Madison, stands guard during an Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE) in April 2003. The Fighter Wing experienced an ORE and an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) last year — coming through with flying colors. See story on page 22.

Departments of the Army and Air Force
National Guard of Wisconsin
Office of the Adjutant General
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